(d) if so, the further reaction of Government on such stand of Pakistan Government on prisoners?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The present arrangement between India and Pakistan on grant of Consular Access and the release of each other's nationals in custody is governed by the provisions of the Protocol on Consular access of 2 November 1982. Government is concerned that 372 fishermen and an estimated 199 prisoners are in jails in Pakistan, many of whom have not been granted consular access despsite prolonged periods in custody.

(c) On occassion there has been delay in repatriation of Pakistan prisoners as travel documents were not provided to them in time by the Government of Pakistan.

(d) A new Consular Agreement is being finalised with Pakistan to replace the existing protocol to ensure expeditious release of and consular access to prisoners. A Judicial Committee comprising superior judges from both countries has been set up to address such issues.

Capturing of Indian boats by Pakistan

2230. SHRI VIJAYKUMAR RUPANI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 343 Indian fishing boats have been captured and kept in custody by Pakistan Marine Security Agency (PMSA);

(b) if so, the action Government is taking to get the boats released;

(c) whether Government is contemplating to provide insurance or loan for the replacement of the seized boats; and

(d) if so, the component of subsidy and rate of interests on the loans by banks and financial institutions?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Government are aware of 342 Indian fishing boats currently held by Pakistan. During the SAARC Summit in New Delhi on 4 April 2007, the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr. Shaukat Aziz had assured Prime Minister that Pakistan would take early action to return fishing boats seized from Indian fishermen to their owners. Government await the implementation of this commitment. The matter is being continuously pursued with the Government of Pakistan.

(c) and (d) On 27 September 2007 Prime Minister announced that Ministry of Finance shall liaise with the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) which has been designated as the implementing agency to develop a suitable soft loan package for the replacement of fishing boats.

Indians in forced marriages in England

†2231. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:
SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:
SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether forced marriages in England include Indians;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether learning English is being made mandatory for marrying girls; and

(c) the details thereof with Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Government of India have not received any complaint or report of forced marriages among the members of the Indian community in the UK.

(b) No.

(c) Does not arise.

Maoists' base in Bhutan

2232. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIYA:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that Maoists have now selected 'Bhutan' as their base to conduct further anti-Indian activities in nexus with the ultras in North-Eastern States;

(b) if so, the facts and details thereof;

(c) whether Government has taken/proposes to take up the matter with the Bhutan Government and to ensure that Maoists base in Bhutan is crushed; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) Both India and Bhutan are committed that neither Government shall allow the use of its territory for activities harmful to the national security and interest of the other.

Agreement with France

2233. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that France has expressed its keenness to negotiate an agreement with India an agreement on the lines of the 123 agreements;

(b) if so, the progress that has been made in this regard;

(c) the status of safeguard agreement with the international atomic energy agencies; and

(d) the progress that has been made in nuclear supplier group?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Yes. A bilateral Cooperation Agreement on the Development of Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy has been finalised with France.

(c) and (d) Government are currently engaged in negotiations with the IAEA to finalise an agreed text of an India-specific Safeguards Agreement. The conclusion of the safeguards agreement will enable the Nuclear Suppliers Group to adopt an appropriate India specific exemption to its guidelines. Government remain engaged with NSG countries to this end.